

# Grants Concept / Proposal Enhancement Guide

## To Do!

- ☒ Get App.
- ☒ Read Instruc.
- ☒ Fill out App.
- ☐ Send In



## ENHANCEMENT TOPICS

1. Getting Started
2. Follow Directions
3. Requirements
4. Information
5. Budget
6. Partnerships and Community Support
7. Proposal Enhancement Summary
8. Other Resources

## Getting Started

- Review the grant solicitation as soon as it becomes available.
- Read the grant solicitation/application package thoroughly.
- Determine whether the project is a good match for the specified grant focus and meets the criteria identified in the grant solicitation, before investing time to prepare the concept or proposal.
- Read the Sample Agreement Terms and Conditions to determine whether complying with them will be an issue.
- Avoid writing a grant to implement a project the organization does not intend to sustain.
- Make a list of the missing items and locate them before preparing the grant concept or proposal.
- Create a timeline to complete the grant proposal. Begin working on it early enough to use the designated question and answer period, if needed.

## Follow Directions

- Follow the directions outlined in the solicitation. A complete and comprehensive concept/proposal will help the grant evaluator

understand the project and its potential.

- Provide everything the solicitation requests. Make sure you have all the components related to the grant solicitation such as: attachments, exhibits, forms, etc.
- Use form provided under Grant Solicitation link. Organize the concept or proposal according to the directions outlined in Phase I.

## Requirements

Every grant process has requirements. Each concept or proposal will be evaluated according to how efficiently the requested information is provided, how well the project's potential is proven and whether the concept or proposal meets the requirements outlined in the solicitation.

Submit the concept/proposal before the due date. No matter how well written, failure to meet the deadline will disqualify the concept/proposal from review by the evaluators. Complete it a week or two early to allow ample time for the proposal to reach its destination.

## Information

- If you need to explain why the project is needed, make sure you communicate this clearly and convincingly. Identify the specific problem the project will resolve or address.
- Show how the problems to be resolved in the project will help the potential funding agency fulfill their goals and objectives.
- Provide convincing data demonstrating the project's potential.

- Use statistics to support the existence of the problem or issue. This may include data from a waste audit, past collection or pilot project.
- If data does not exist, spend time collecting data showing there is a need for the project and include the findings.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the issue or problem to show why the organization is uniquely suited to conduct the project.
- Identify a project goal and create measurable objectives (targets) to accomplish the goal. Every project should have a goal. Goals are based on what the project will accomplish. The objectives will form the basis for the activities of the project and will serve as the basis for evaluating the project.
- Develop an evaluation plan to show how progress towards project goals will be evaluated.
- Review proposal scoring criteria, if available. Make sure each item identified in the scoring criteria is addressed in the proposal.
- Information included in the concept and proposal should be useful and serve a purpose.

## Budget

The budget reflects the investment the organization and the grant provider are making. It should be consistent with project activities. Items listed in the budget should be identified in the narrative section of your proposal.

- Make sure all line items of the budget are necessary, reasonable and cost-effective. The project's cost effectiveness is given careful consideration in the evaluation process.
- Research expenses to make sure estimates are realistic and as accurate as possible.



- Double-check all figures and totals.

### Some budgetary components include:

- Personnel Services
- Equipment
- Operating Costs
- In-kind Services
- Leveraged Resources

### Personnel Services

Personnel services are the costs charged against a program or project for an individual or individual's time. Those costs may be associated with fees or salaries and include the services of expert consultants or basic labor costs at minimum wage.

### Equipment

Equipment and other expenses related to the installation of equipment would be listed under the equipment line item. Such items may include: recycle bins, trucks for collection and storage area construction.

### Operating Costs

These costs may include bin liners, gloves, fuel, stamps, signage and supplies needed for the project.

### Leveraged Resources

In-kind services may be donated labor, space (including maintenance and utilities), promotional activities, goods or services. They should be listed as leveraged resources. The value of each in-kind contribution should be documented and should not exceed its fair market value.

Matching funds, made by your organization or third party, are monetary contributions and should be listed separately from in-kind services.

## Partnerships and Community Support

Partnerships and other collaborative efforts are usually considered favorably. Partnerships may contribute leveraged resources. It is a third party committed to the success of the project, mentioned by the grant applicant in either the narrative or listed on the budgetary section of the proposal. Not all grants require partnerships, nor do all grant applicants include them in the proposals. Whether financial or service related, partnerships demonstrate the organization's commitment to the project. Partnerships, in-kind services and leveraged resources will strengthen your proposal because they add value.

- Include letters showing commitment from the community or business to the project.
- Include letters of support stating how partners will contribute to the project. Letters of support demonstrate the dedication of the organization and partners to the success of the project.

## Proposal Enhancement Summary

- **Be thorough.** Everyone competing for grants receives the same solicitation and is subject to the same requirements.
- **Read the entire grant solicitation thoroughly.** Identify the grant focus and determine if the project meets the grant focus.
- **Make a list** of all information supplied and a separate list of information requested. Determine what will take the longest to retrieve and compile. Place the items requiring the most time at the top of your list. Seek help, if necessary.



- **Allow ample time** to meet the deadline.
- **Spend time planning and organizing** before preparing the concept or proposal.
- **Understand** what the solicitation asks for and provide the most accurate information possible.
- **Write clearly and succinctly.** If a format is provided, follow it.
- **Proofread** the entire package before submitting it. Check for grammatical and spelling errors. Double-check the budget. Ask someone unfamiliar with the concept or proposal to review it. This may help identify areas in need of clarification.
- **Assemble the entire package.** Check for deficiencies, including missing documents. A check-off list may be helpful.
- **Allow plenty of time for your proposal to reach its destination.** Double-check the address the grant proposal should be sent to. Make sure adequate postage is included and all labeling is easy to read. Ensure the concept or proposal arrives before the due date, consider certified mail or other guaranteed delivery options.

## Other Resources

There are many proposal-writing resources on the web that may be useful as you prepare your concept or proposal. Although the Department does not endorse any in particular, several are included below:

[www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Grants/Tips.htm](http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Grants/Tips.htm)

[www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/hintsone.htm](http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/hintsone.htm)



*This Grant Concept/Proposal Enhancement Guide is a tool to help grant seekers avoid common mistakes and be better prepared for the application process. Evaluation criteria for each grant solicitation may vary from one to the next. There is no sure way to guarantee a winning concept paper or proposal just because all the information presented in this guide is utilized.*